

October 13, 1998

Mr. James Knubel
Chief Nuclear Officer
Power Authority of the State of
New York
123 Main Street
White Plains, NY 10601

SUBJECT: JAMES A. FITZPATRICK NUCLEAR POWER PLANT - BULLETIN 96-03,
"POTENTIAL PLUGGING OF EMERGENCY CORE COOLING SUCTION
STRAINERS BY DEBRIS IN BOILING WATER REACTORS" (TAC NO. M96146)

Dear Mr. Knubel:

On September 16, 1998, the New York Power Authority (NYPA) provided information regarding NRC Bulletin (B) 96-03, "Potential Plugging of Emergency Core Cooling Suction Strainers by Debris in Boiling Water Reactors" for the James A. FitzPatrick Nuclear Power Plant. This information addressed issues discussed in a May 21, 1998, meeting between the NRC staff and NYPA personnel, and documented NYPA's basis for proposing to change commitments regarding completion of the B 96-03 requested actions at FitzPatrick.

Your letter describes plans to sponsor testing of microporous insulation to determine if such material presently installed in the FitzPatrick drywell can remain in place or should be replaced. If required, this insulation will be replaced during the R14/C15 refueling outage presently scheduled for the fourth quarter of 2000. Until that time, the current licensing basis, which assumes 50% suction strainer blockage, will remain in effect.

We find that your request to defer completion of the actions requested in B 96-03 is acceptable, based on your commitments to ensure suppression pool cleanliness, to replace mineral wool insulation in the drywell, and to complete installation of improved suction strainers during the 1998 refueling outage. These actions provide assurance of the safe operation of the FitzPatrick plant until the R14/C15 refueling outage.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact me at (301) 415-1470.

Sincerely, Original Signed by:
Joseph F. Williams, Project Manager
Project Directorate I-1
Division of Reactor Projects - I/II
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

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DFOI

Docket No. 50-333

cc: See next page

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James Knubel
Power Authority of the State
of New York

James A. FitzPatrick Nuclear
Power Plant

cc:

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